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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A node for grooming low capacity client signals into a high capacity signal, comprising:
 - an interface to a first high capacity trunk for directly coupling to a type one node; and
 - an interface to a second high capacity trunk for directly coupling to a type two node;wherein only a portion of those low capacity client signals destined for the type one node are groomed into the second high capacity trunk to the type two node.
2. Cancelled
3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the type two node is a high traffic node.
4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the type one node is a cable station and the type two node is a central office.
5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the low capacity client signals comprise plesiochronous digital hierarchy signals and the high capacity signal comprises a synchronous transport module signal.
6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for performing selective grooming of client signals, the apparatus comprising:
 - a node coupled (a) directly to a first node via a first high capacity trunk, and (b) directly to a second node via a second high capacity trunk such that only a portion of the client signals destined for the first node are groomed into the high second capacity trunk to the second node.

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7. Cancelled

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the first node is a low traffic node and the second node is a high traffic node.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the first node is a cable station and the second node is a central office.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the client signals comprise plesiochronous digital hierarchy signals and the high capacity trunk supports a synchronous transport module signal.

11. Cancelled

12. Cancelled

13. Cancelled

14. (Currently Amended) A method for use in a node, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving low capacity client signals;

selectively grooming a portion of the received low capacity client signals into a first high capacity trunk directly coupled to a first type of node for transmission to a the first type of node; and

transmitting others of the low capacity client signals over ~~an other~~ a second high capacity trunk directly coupled to a second type of node;

wherein said others of the low capacity signals transmitted over the ~~other~~ second high capacity trunk comprise low capacity client signals destined for the first type of node.

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15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the low capacity client signals signals and the high capacity trunk supports a synchronous transport module signal.
16. (Cancelled)
17. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the second type of node is a cable station and the first type of node is a central office.
18. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the second type of node is a low traffic node and the first type of node is a high traffic node.
19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein grooming of the portion of those low capacity client signals destined for said type one node into the second high capacity trunk to said type two node further comprises:
determining an amount of traffic between another type one node and said type one node;
determining whether said amount of traffic between said another type one node and said type one node exceeds a threshold, said threshold comprising a fraction of a capacity of said first high capacity trunk; and
if said amount of traffic between said type one node and said another type one node does not exceed said threshold, routing said amount of traffic over said second high capacity trunk to said type two node.
20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising:
if said amount of traffic between said type one node and said another type one node exceeds said threshold, provisioning at least one additional trunk between said another type one node and said type one node.